

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3739

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

S E C R E T MANILA 7094

LIMDIS

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SEATO XC

SUBJ: MAY 21 MEETING WITH MARCOS RE SEATO

1. DURING DISCUSSION I HAD WITH PRESIDENT MARCOS MAY 21 CONCERNING HIS FORTHCOMING TRIP TO CHINA, HE SUDDENLY ASKED WHAT I THOUGHT ABOUT FUTURE OF SEATO. HE RAISED SUBJECT IN SUCH A WAY THAT I ASSUME HE EXPECTS CHINESE TO POSE OBJECTIONS TO CONTINUING PHILIPPINE MEMBERSHIP IN THIS "ANTI-CHINESE" ORGANIZATION.

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2. I SAID THAT I ASSUMED THE FUTURE OF SEATO DEPENDED

VERY HEAVILY ON THE FUTURE ATTITUDE OF THE THAI GOVERNMENT. AFTER REVIEWING WITH HIM THE NATURE OF THE SEATO AND RUSK-THANAT AGREEMENTS, I POINTED OUT THAT OUR ONLY SECURITY LINKS WITH THAILAND DEPENDED ON THE EXISTENCE OF THE SEATO TREATY. IF THAILAND WISHES TO CONTINUE A SECURITY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S., SEATO MUST CONTINUE TO EXIST.

3. MARCOS TURNED THIS OBSERVATION AROUND BY ASKING WHETHER A THAI DECISION TO WITHDRAW FROM SEATO WOULD MEAN THAT THE U.S. WOULD BE PREPARED TO SEE SEATO ABOLISHED. I SAID THAT SUCH A THAI DECISION WOULD DOUBTLESS CAUSE THE U.S. AND OTHER SEATO MEMBERS TO TAKE A GOOD HARD LOOK AT THE FUTURE VALIDITY OF THE ORGANIZATION, BUT I WAS NOT RPT NOT PREPARED TO STATE CATEGORICALLY THAT THE U.S. WOULD FAVOR ITS DISSOLUTION.

4. I THEN ASKED MARCOS WHETHER HE THOUGHT PEKING WOULD PRESS THE THAIS TO SEVER THEIR ONLY EXTANT SECURITY LINK WITH THE U.S., OR WHETHER THEY MIGHT EVEN LEAN IN THE OTHER DIRECTION AND SUGGEST THAT THE THAIS MAINTAIN THEIR MEMBERSHIP IN SEATO. MARCOS MUSED ABOUT THIS FOR AWHILE, BUT SLID OFF TO SPECULATION ON CHINESE ATTITUDES TOWARDS ASEAN. HE CAME DOWN RATHER COMFORTABLY ON THE WISHFUL THOUGHT THAT THE CHINESE WOULD PROBABLY WELCOME ASEAN AS A COUNTER TO SOVIET PENETRATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. I SAID HIS TRIP TO PEKING OUGHT TO PROVIDE AN INTERESTING LITMUS TO TEST THIS THEORY.
SULLIVAN

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NNN

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